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(54) **SYSTEM, METHOD AND COMPUTER PROGRAM PRODUCT FOR REGISTERING PRODUCTS AND PROMOTING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS**

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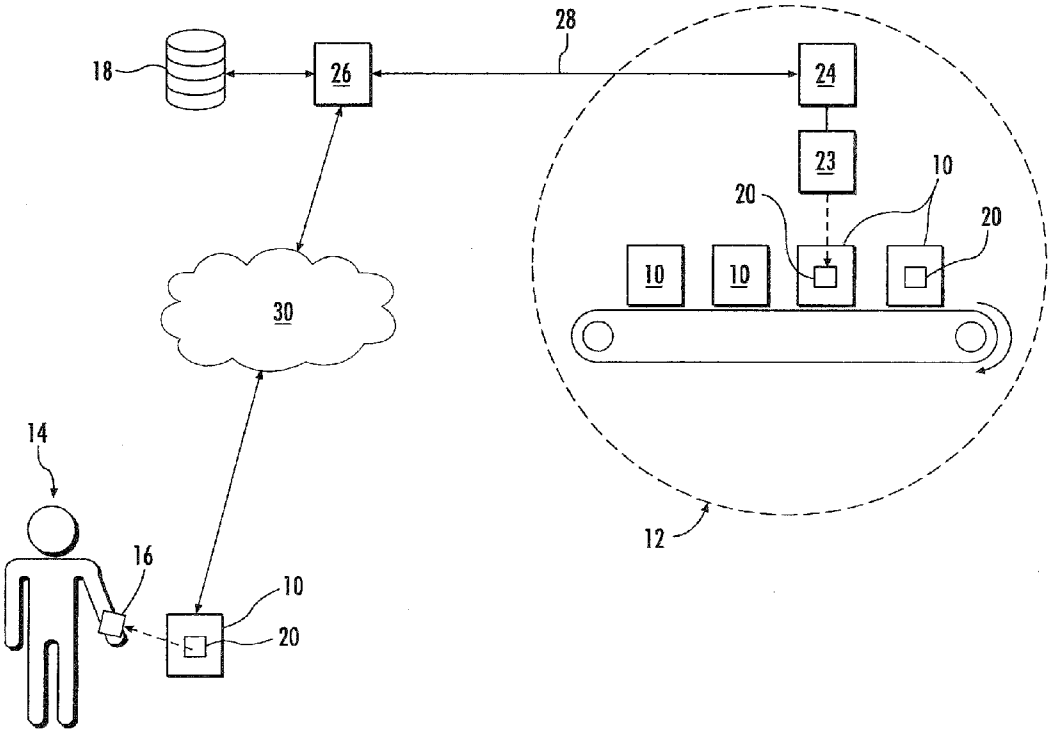
USPC **705/302**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Regarding a product that is provided by a provider and received by a recipient, registration of the product and following-up with the recipient may be facilitated by way of web-based, symbology-driven product registration systems and methods.



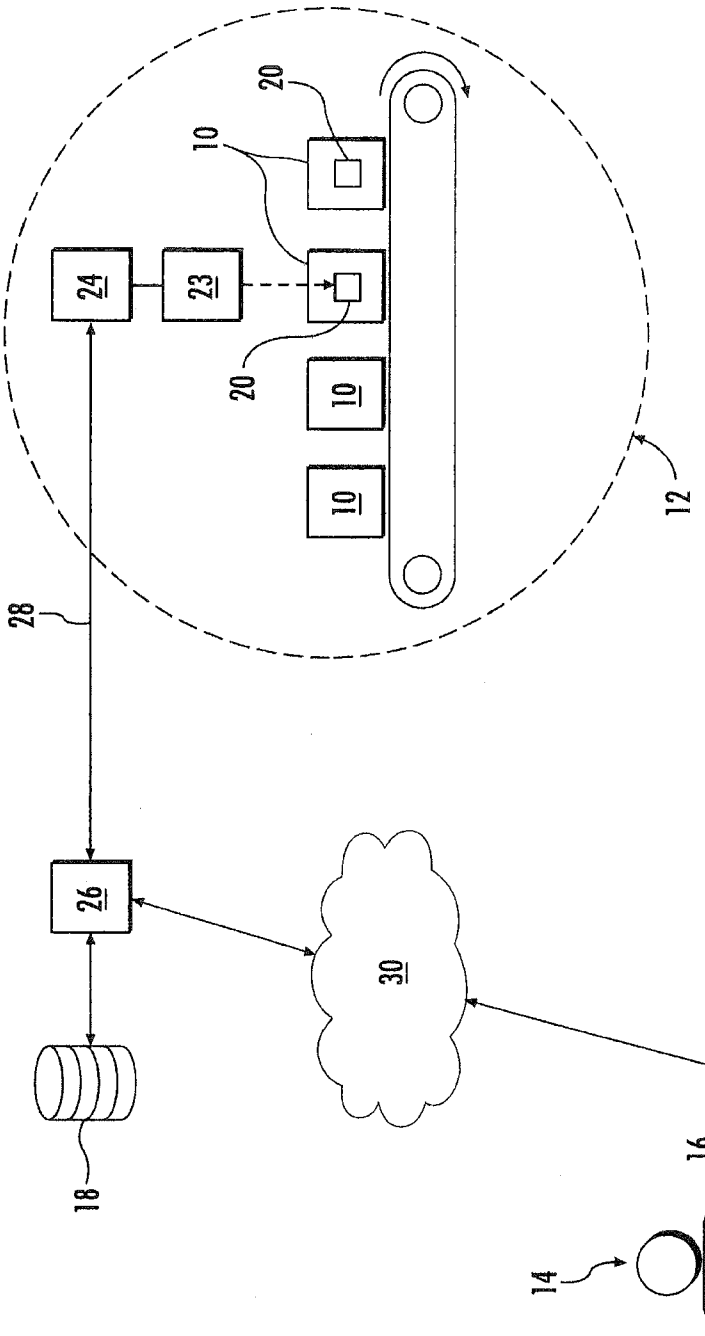


FIG. 1

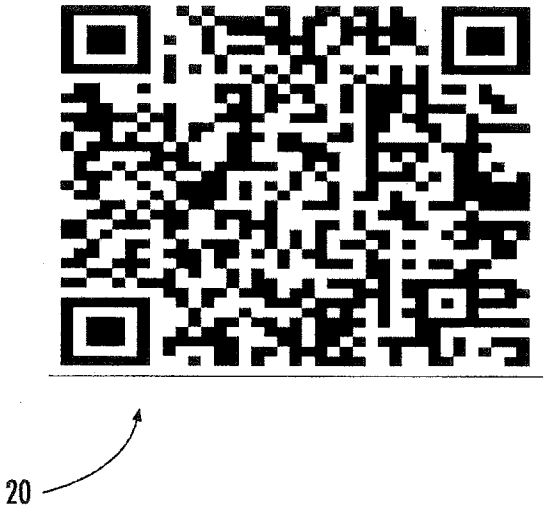


FIG. 2

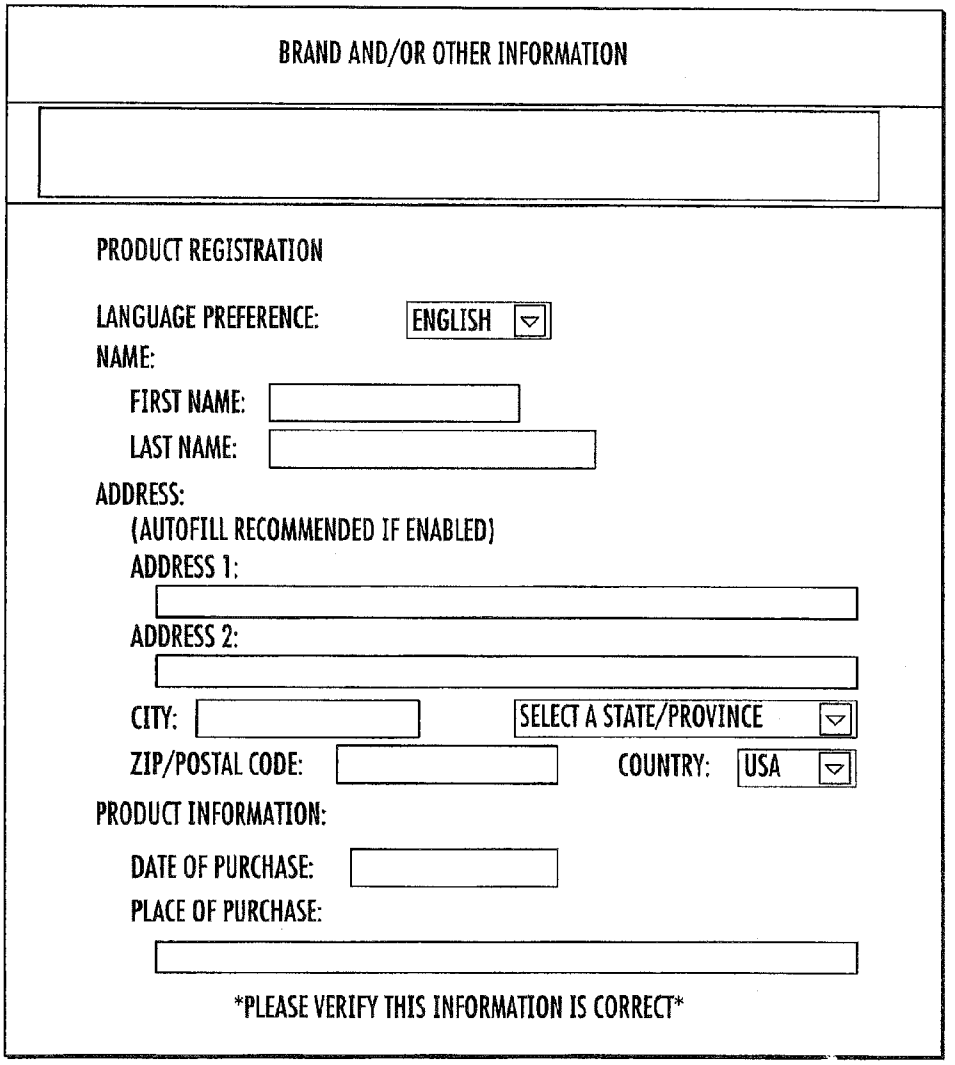

BRAND AND/OR OTHER INFORMATION
PRODUCT REGISTRATION
LANGUAGE PREFERENCE:
ENGLISH
NAME:
FIRST NAME:
LAST NAME:
ADDRESS:
(AUTOFILL RECOMMENDED IF ENABLED)
ADDRESS 1:
ADDRESS 2:
CITY:
SELECT A STATE/PROVINCE
ZIP/POSTAL CODE:
COUNTRY:
USA
PRODUCT INFORMATION:
DATE OF PURCHASE:
PLACE OF PURCHASE:
PLEASE VERIFY THIS INFORMATION IS CORRECT
21

FIG. 3

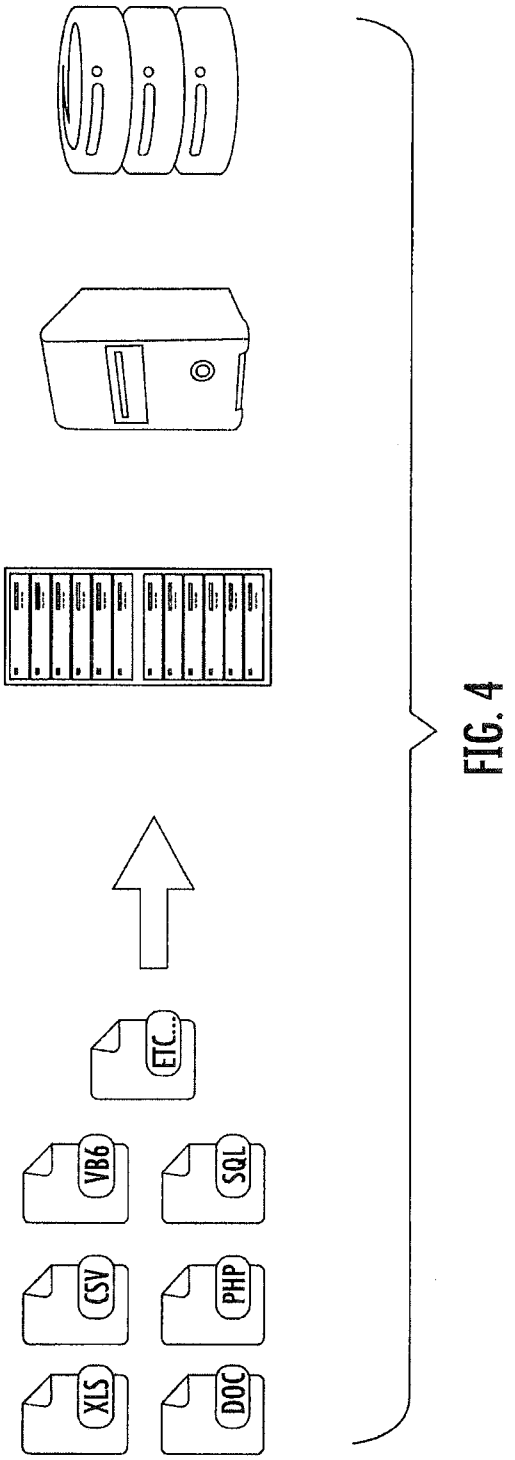


FIG. 4

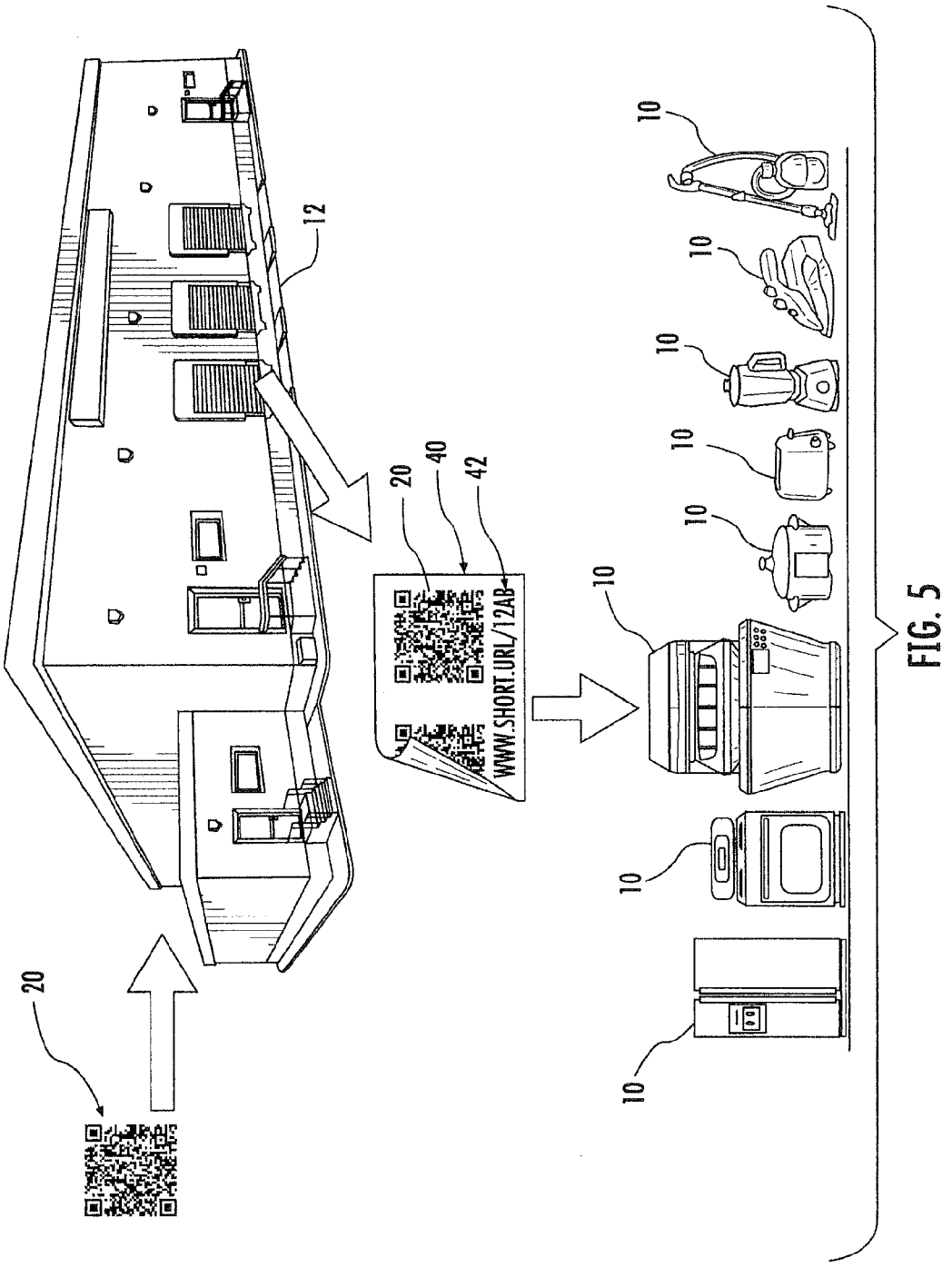


FIG. 5

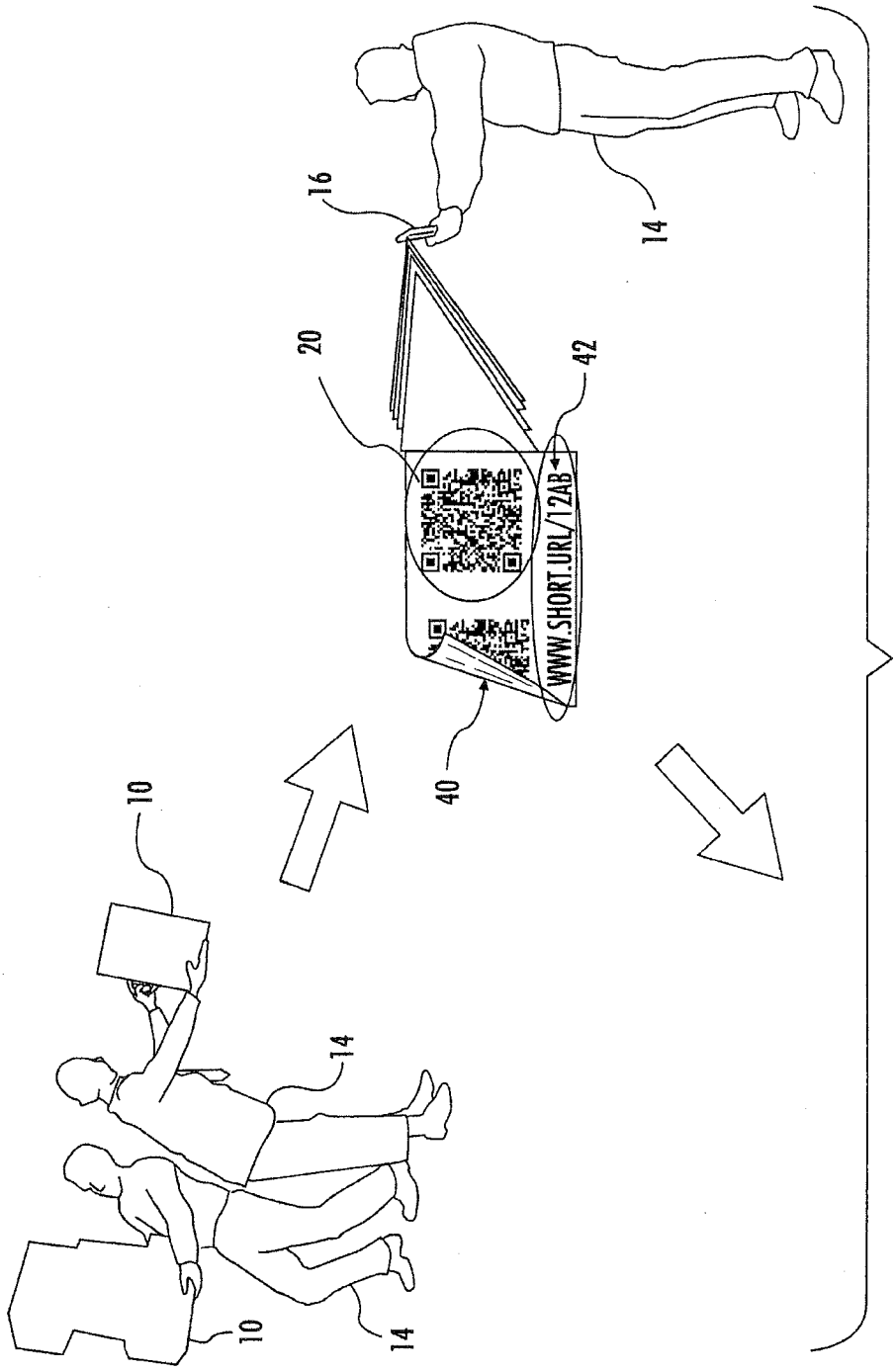


FIG. 6

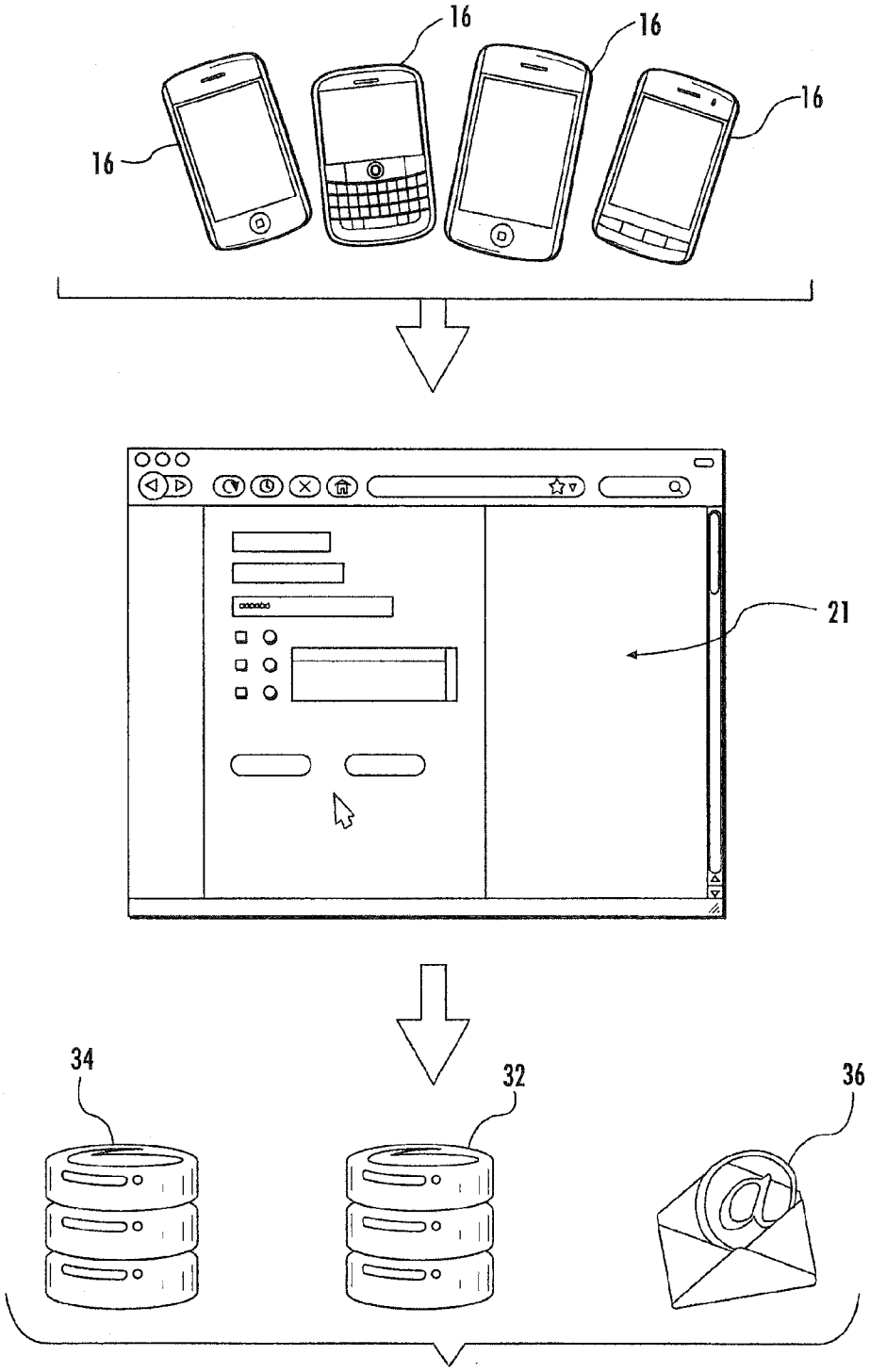


FIG. 7

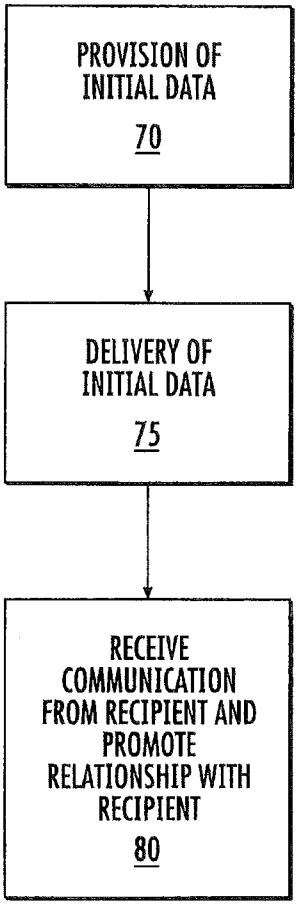

PROVISION OF INITIAL DATA
70
DELIVERY OF INITIAL DATA
75
RECEIVE COMMUNICATION FROM RECIPIENT AND PROMOTE RELATIONSHIP WITH RECIPIENT
80

FIG. 8

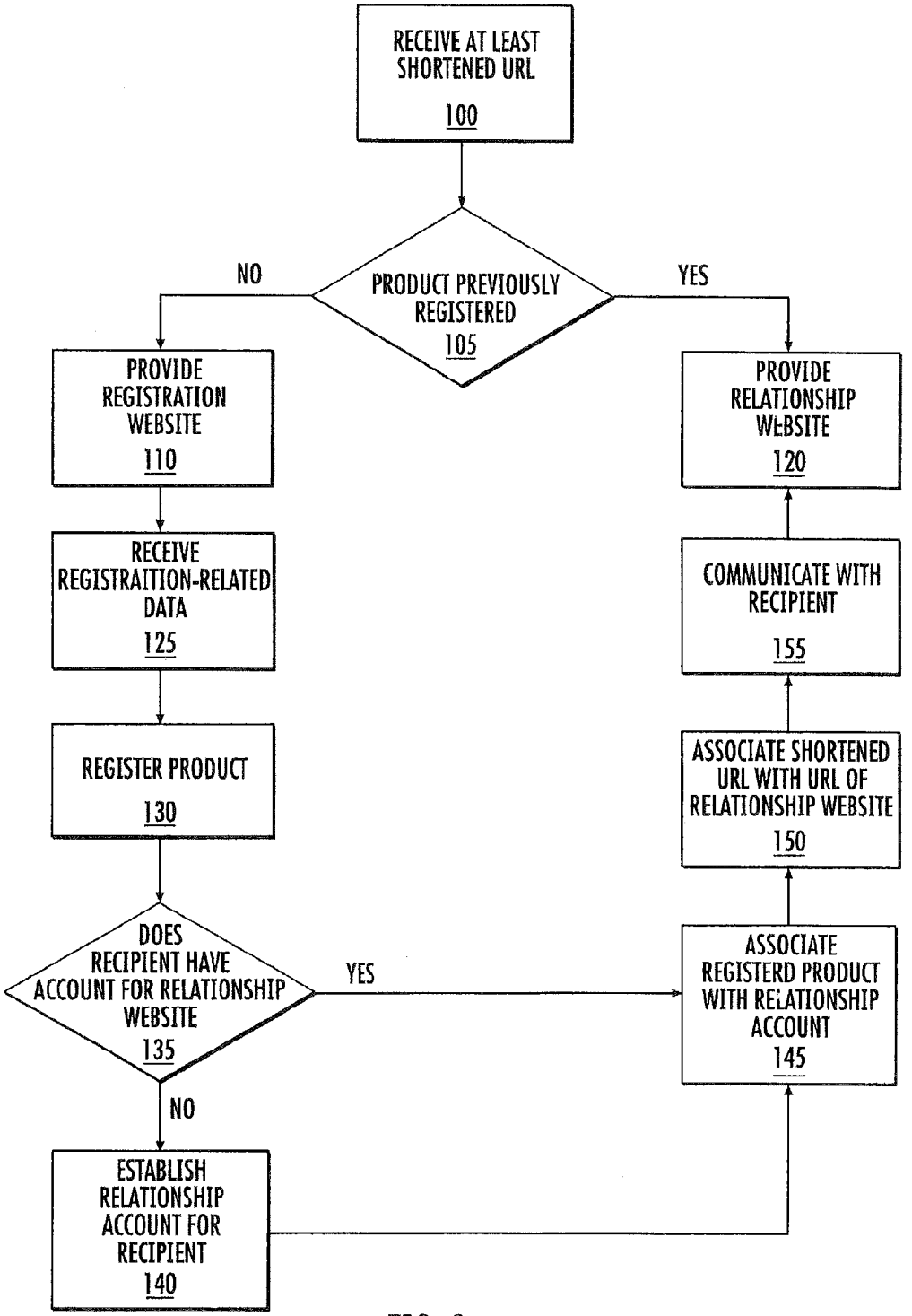

RECEIVE AT LEAST SHORTENED URL
100
PRODUCT PREVIOUSLY REGISTERED
105
NO
YES
PROVIDE REGISTRATION WEBSITE
110
RECEIVE REGISTRAITION-RELATED DATA
125
REGISTER PRODUCT
130
DOES RECIPIENT HAVE ACCOUNT FOR RELATIONSHIP WEBSITE
135
YES
NO
ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIP ACCOUNT FOR RECIPIENT
140
PROVIDE RELATIONSHIP WEBSITE
120
COMMUNICATE WITH RECIPIENT
155
ASSOCIATE SHORTENED URL WITH URL OF RELATIONSHIP WEBSITE
150
ASSOCIATE REGISTERD PRODUCT WITH RELATIONSHIP ACCOUNT
145

FIG. 9

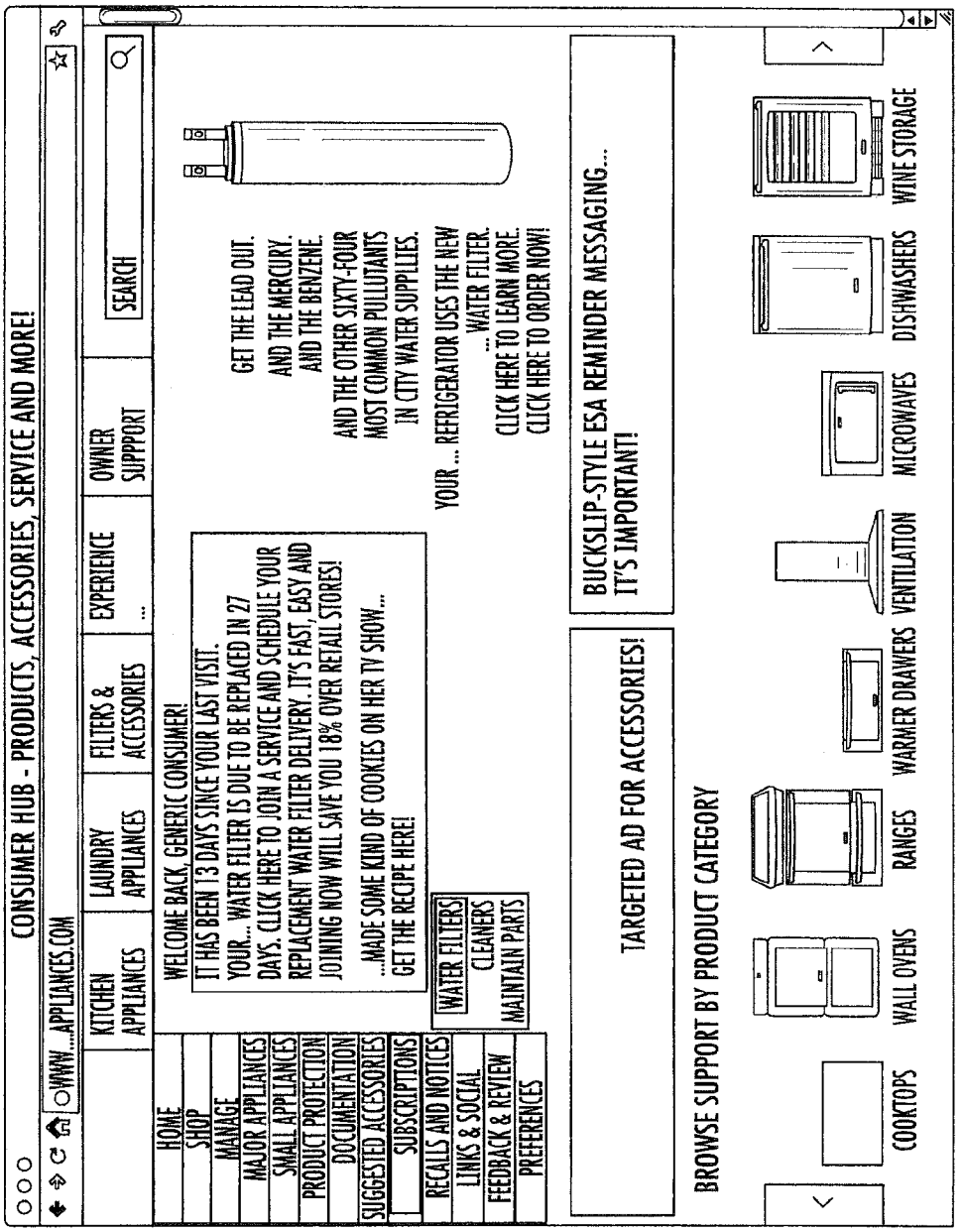

CONSUMER HUB - PRODUCTS, ACCESSORIES, SERVICE AND MORE!
WWW....APPLIANCES.COM
KITCHEN APPLIANCES
LAUNDRY APPLIANCES
FILTERS & ACCESSORIES
EXPERIENCE ...
OWNER SUPPORT
SEARCH
HOME
SHOP
MANAGE
MAJOR APPLIANCES
SMALL APPLIANCES
PRODUCT PROTECTION
DOCUMENTATION
SUGGESTED ACCESSORIES
SUBSCRIPTIONS
RECALLS AND NOTICES
LINKS & SOCIAL
FEEDBACK & REVIEW
PREFERENCES
WELCOME BACK, GENERIC CONSUMER!
IT HAS BEEN 13 DAYS SINCE YOUR LAST VISIT.
YOUR... WATER FILTER IS DUE TO BE REPLACED IN 27 DAYS. CLICK HERE TO JOIN A SERVICE AND SCHEDULE YOUR REPLACEMENT WATER FILTER DELIVERY. IT'S FAST, EASY AND JOINING NOW WILL SAVE YOU 18% OVER RETAIL STORES!
...MADE SOME KIND OF COOKIES ON HER TV SHOW... GET THE RECIPE HERE!
WATER FILTERS
CLEANERS
MAINTAIN PARTS
GET THE LEAD OUT.
AND THE MERCURY.
AND THE BENZENE.
AND THE OTHER SIXTY-FOUR MOST COMMON PULLUTANTS IN CITY WATER SUPPLIES.
YOUR ... REFRIGERATOR USES THE NEW ... WATER FILTER.
CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE.
CLICK HERE TO ORDER NOW!
TARGETED AD FOR ACCESSORIES!
BUCKSLIP-STYLE ESA REMINDER MESSAGING...
IT'S IMPORTANT!
BROWSE SUPPORT BY PRODUCT CATEGORY
COOKTOPS
WALL OVENS
RANGES
WARMER DRAWERS
VENTILATION
MICROWAVES
DISHWASHERS
WINE STORAGE

FIG. 10

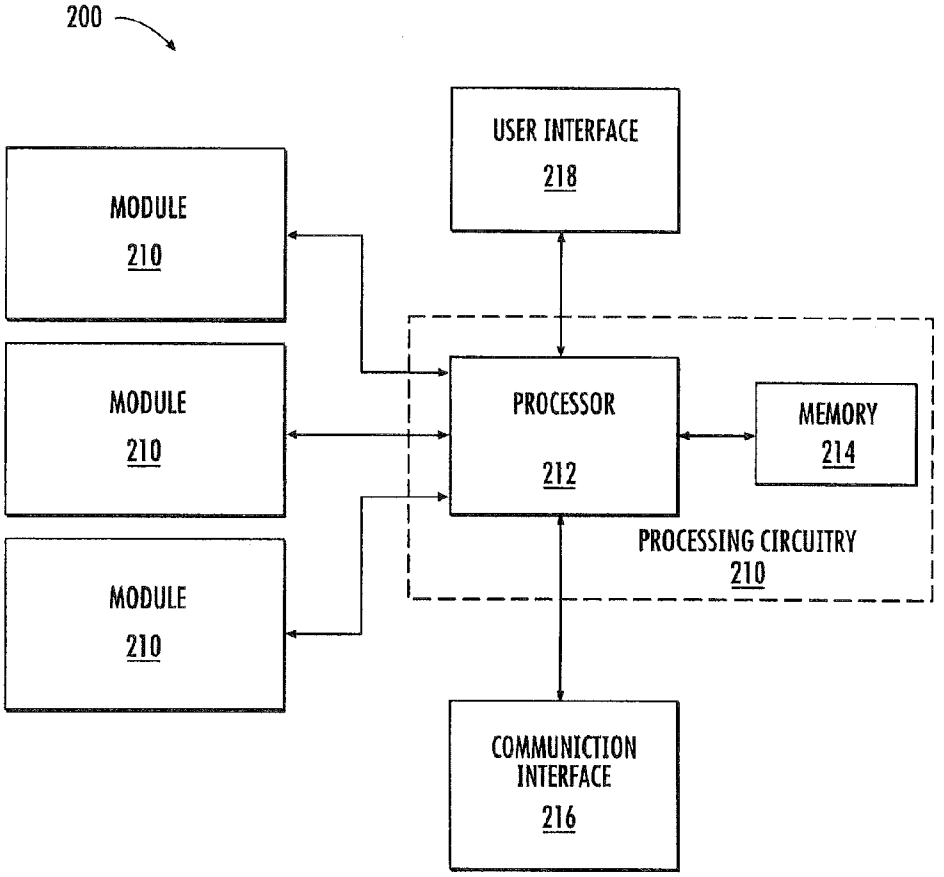

200
USER INTERFACE
218
MODULE
210
MODULE
210
MODULE
210
PROCESSOR
212
MEMORY
214
PROCESSING CIRCUITRY
210
COMMUNICTION
INTERFACE
216

FIG. 11

SYSTEM, METHOD AND COMPUTER PROGRAM PRODUCT FOR REGISTERING PRODUCTS AND PROMOTING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a continuation application of U.S. application Ser. No. 13/869,527, filed Apr. 24, 2013, that claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/637,536, filed Apr. 24, 2012, which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety and for all purposes.

BACKGROUND

[0002] It is typical for companies to have Customer Relationship Management ("CRM") systems for use in fostering relationships with customers. CRM systems typically comprise a computer database in which customer information is associated with product registration information. For example, when a customer purchases a product, the product may be accompanied by a product registration card that the customer may fill out, so that the completed product registration card includes information about both the customer and the product. Then, the customer may mail the completed registration card to the company or its agent, and the information from the card may be entered into the CRM computer database for future use by the company. For example, the CRM computer database may be used for handling product recalls and/or for soliciting extended service warranty business.

[0003] There are barriers in current product registration processes. For example, product registrations cards may need to be printed in different languages. Also, customers frequently do not complete and return product registration cards.

SUMMARY

[0004] One aspect of this disclosure is the provision of web-based, symbology-driven product registration systems and methods.

[0005] In accordance with one aspect of this disclosure, a method for registering a product, which is provided by a provider (e.g., company) and received by a recipient (e.g., consumer), comprises associating at least one symbology with the product, wherein the at least one symbology comprises a decodable URL for at least indirectly accessing a website comprising a webpage, and the at least one symbology is configured to be imaged and decoded at least by a mobile device associated with the recipient. Associated with the URL is at least one product identifier of a plurality of different product identifiers. The method may further comprise associating the product identifier with information from the provider about the product in at least one computer database, wherein at least some of the information about the product varies between products. The method may further comprise a portal apparatus receiving the URL from a web browser of a recipient's mobile device. The method may further comprise the portal apparatus sending the webpage to the web browser of the recipient's mobile device at least in response to receiving the URL from the web browser of the recipient's mobile device, wherein the webpage includes fields for receiving personal information from the recipient for registering the product identified by the decodable product identifier. The method may further comprise the portal apparatus receiving the recipient's personal information from the web browser of the recipient's mobile device, at least partially in response to sending the webpage. The method may further comprise the portal apparatus associating the recipient's personal information with the information from the provider about the product identified by the decodable product identifier, for product registration purposes.

[0006] Thereafter, the provider may follow up with the recipient, comprising using at least some of the associated personal and product information for communicating with the recipient. Also, for each recipient, a unique relationship account may be established and associated with all of the recipient's registered products, such as for enhancing the relationship between the provider and the recipient. In this regard, subsequent receipt of the above-discussed URL from the recipient may result in another webpage being provided to the recipient, wherein the another webpage has associated therewith information about and/or tailored to one or more of (e.g., all of) the recipient's registered products.

[0007] The foregoing presents a simplified summary in order to provide a basic understanding of some aspects of this disclosure. This summary is not an extensive overview and is not intended to identify key or critical elements of the invention or to delineate the scope of the invention. The purpose of this section is to present some concepts of the disclosure in a simplified form as a prelude to the more detailed description that is presented later. Other aspects of this disclosure will become apparent from the following.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] Having described some aspects of this disclosure in general terms, reference will now be made to the accompanying drawings, which are not necessarily drawn to scale. The drawings are exemplary only, and should not be construed as limiting the invention.

[0009] FIG. **1** schematically illustrates aspects of systems and methods for registering products, in accordance with a first embodiment of this disclosure.

[0010] FIG. **2** is a more detailed view of a representative matrix code symbology schematically shown in FIG. **1**.

[0011] FIG. **3** illustrates a Product Registration Webpage in accordance with the first embodiment.

[0012] FIGS. **4-7** schematically illustrate aspects of an exemplary method and associated features, in accordance with first and second embodiments of this disclosure.

[0013] FIG. **8** is a process flow diagram illustrating an exemplary overall process associated with at least registering a product that is provided by a provider and received by a recipient, in accordance with an aspect of this disclosure.

[0014] FIG. **9** is a process flow diagram illustrating an exemplary process that may be performed by a portal apparatus, for receiving communications from recipients and promoting relationships with recipients, in accordance with an aspect of this disclosure.

[0015] FIG. **10** illustrates a Relationship Webpage in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of this disclosure.

[0016] FIG. **11** illustrates a block diagram of, for example, a portal apparatus that may be implemented on one or more devices of this disclosure, and that may be operative for at least partially providing some of the features of this disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0017] Exemplary embodiments of this disclosure are described below and illustrated in the accompanying figures, in which like numerals refer to like parts. The embodiments described provide examples and should not be interpreted as limiting the scope of the invention. Other embodiments, and modifications and improvements of the described embodiments, will occur to those skilled in the art and all such other embodiments, modifications and improvements are within the scope of the present invention.

[0018] Referring in greater detail to the drawings, FIG. **1** schematically illustrates aspects of systems and methods for registering products **10**, in accordance with a first embodiment of this disclosure. The products **10** may be provided by a provider, and the provider may be a company having a facility **12** (e.g., a manufacturing facility (e.g., factory), packaging facility, distribution facility and/or any other suitable type of facility) from which the products originate and/or through which the products pass. For example and not for the purpose of limiting the scope of this disclosure, in FIG. **1** a series of the products **10** at the facility **12** is schematically shown as traveling along an assembly line, conveyor system, or the like; whereas another product **10** is proximate a recipient **14** (e.g., customer). In FIG. **1**, both the recipient **14** and the product **10** proximate the recipient are located remotely from the facility **12**. The products **10** may be any suitable products, such as major appliances for air care, dish care, fabric care, food preparation, and food preservation; professional products; and small domestic appliances. As more specific examples, the products **10** may be appliances, such as kitchen and/or laundry appliances, although other types of products are also within the scope of this disclosure. The kitchen appliances may be one or more of an oven, stove, range, warmer, toaster, dishwasher, refrigerator, freezer, coffee maker, blender and crock pot. The laundry appliances may be one or more of a laundry washer, laundry dryer and iron. Other types of appliances such as, but not limited to, vacuum cleaners are also within the scope of this disclosure.

[0019] In one aspect, the first embodiment pertains to optimizing and streamlining the product registration process, such as by providing the ability for recipients **14** (e.g., customers) to register products **10** via a website and computerized mobile devices **16**, such as smart phones. In addition, the utilization of codes imbedded in symbologies **20** and a computer database **18** comprising a look-up table, or the like, minimizes manual data entry in a manner that saves time and promotes accuracy, as will be discussed in greater detail below. The database **18** is shown in FIG. **1** as being associated with a computer and/or computer server **26**, or the like, located remotely from the facility **12**, although the database **18** may be located at the facility and be associated with a computer **24** at the facility, or the database **18** may be in any other suitable location(s).

[0020] The computer **24** and server **26** may be in communication with one another over a first network **28** and/or a second network **30**, and/or the computer **24** and server **26** may be consolidated together into one or more computers. The first network **28** may be a dedicated network that is separate from the second network **30**, or the first and second networks **28**, **30** may be the same network. The first and second networks **28**, **30** may include one or more suitable communication networks, such as, but not limited to, the Internet, cable television networks, cellular data networks, and/or the public switched telephone network. Alternatively, the server **26** together with the computer databases **18** may, optionally, be located at the facility **12** proximate the computer **24**, in which case the server **26** and the computer **24** may be connected to one another by way of a local area network.

[0021] Codes used in the registration process may be embedded in suitable one-dimensional symbologies, such as Universal Product Code barcodes. However, two-dimensional symbologies **20**, such as matrix codes having square or dot-shaped modules arranged on a grid pattern, or the like, may be preferred. Of particular interest may be the Quick Response ("QR") type of matrix symbologies. An example of a suitable two-dimensional symbology **20** in the form of a matrix code symbology is shown in FIG. **2**. The registration-related symbologies **20** may be printed by way of a printer **23** simultaneously with other symbologies that are conventionally associated with products **10**.

[0022] More specifically regarding the codes embedded in the symbologies **22** for at least the registration process, these codes may optionally comprise both a product identifier and a universal resource locator (URL) (e.g., a shortened URL), or the codes embedded in the symbologies may consist essentially of, or consist of, URLs (e.g., shortened or short URLs) that function at least indirectly as, or are otherwise associated with, product identifiers. More specifically, each product **10** is identified by a unique identifier for product registration purposes ("product identifier") (e.g., typically no two products have the same product identifier). For example, the product identifier may be a serial number for a product **10**, although the product identifier is shorter than a typical product serial number.

[0023] As mentioned above and as will be discussed in greater detail below, in some embodiments or versions of this disclosure, each symbology **20** may be decoded to provide only a short URL represent. However, this disclosure is not limited to such embodiments or versions. For example, in a first version of the first embodiment, for each product **10**, the respective symbology **20** may include a URL (e.g., a shortened URL) and the respective product identifier. That is, the URL and respective product identifier are coded and embedded into each symbology **20**. The URL is for at least indirectly accessing a portal apparatus comprising a module that is in the form of and/or for providing a Product Registration Website (e.g., a Product Registration Webpage **21** (FIGS. **3** and **7**) of the Product Registration Website). Optionally, the URL may alternatively or also be for at least indirectly accessing a module that is in the form of and/or for providing a Relationship Website (e.g., a Relationship Webpage (FIG. **10**) of the Relationship Website), as will be discussed in greater detail below with reference to FIG. **9**. The portal apparatus may be, may consist essentially of, or may comprise the server **26**, the computer **24**, and/or any combination of these or other suitable features, such that the Product Registration and Relationship Websites may be hosted by the server **26**, the computer **24**, and/or by any other suitable features.

[0024] In the first version of the first embodiment, the same URL may be encoded into each of the symbologies **20**, whereas each symbology has a different/unique product identifier encoded thereinto. In this first version, the product identifiers may be used to respectively identify the registration records of the database **18**, wherein each registration record typically contains numerous fields for data.

[0025] In a second version of the first embodiment, each symbology **20** may "hold" (e.g., be decodable to provide) only a respective short URL, wherein each product **10** may be

identified by a respective unique short URL (e.g., typically no two products have associated therewith the same short URL). In this second version, the short URLs may be used to respectively identify the registration records of the database **18**, wherein each registration record typically contains numerous fields for data, such that each short URL may be respectively associated with a product by way of the product's serial number, product identifier and/or any other suitable identifiers, as will be discussed in greater detail below. For example, the unique short URLs may serve as the unique product identifiers.

[0026] In the first embodiment, software module(s) executing on the computer **24** located at the facility **12** (or any other suitable location) are operative for creating at least the short URLs, optionally also the product identifiers, and the symbologies **20**, and these executing software modules are operative for associating the short URLs and optionally the product identifiers with some of the product registration information (e.g., product serial and model numbers); the symbologies are printed by the printer **23** located at the facility; and the symbologies **20** are respectively associated with products **10** and associated user manuals at the facility **12**, all prior to the recipient **14** participating in the registration process. As one example, the symbologies **20** may be respectively printed onto adhesive-backed labels that are respectively stuck onto the products **10** at the facility **12**, all prior to the recipient **14** participating in the registration process. Accordingly, in FIGS. **1**, **2**, **5** and **6**, each feature identified by reference number **20** may be characterized as being illustrative of an adhesive-backed label that includes a symbology printed thereon, although any other suitable methods and features may be used for associating the symbologies, or the like, with the respective products **10**. Typically, for each product **10**, its associated, unique symbology may also be included in the user manual for the product.

[0027] The above-discussed software module(s) executing on the computer **24** may be incorporated into the existing batch process (e.g., fed by an Excel brand spreadsheet) scripted into Loftware brand enterprise label and print management software module(s), although any other suitable feature(s) (e.g., software module(s)) may be utilized. In addition, the script may go through a series of "GET/POST" parameters and/or a URL shortening script. The symbologies **20** may be respectively associated with the products by being mounted to the products, mounted to the packaging of the products, included on registration cards associated with the products (e.g., the symbologies may be placed on multilingual product registration cards) and/or the symbologies may be associated with the products in any other suitable manner.

[0028] At least a portion of one or more of the features, aspects or steps described as being located at or carried out at the facility **12** may be located at or carried out in any other suitable location. For example, the symbologies **20** may be associated with the products **10** at any suitable location, such as locations positioned downstream from the factory in the flow of goods from the factory. As another example, at least some of the operations carried out by the computer **24** may be carried out by the server **26**, and vice versa; and the computer **24** and server **26** may operate together to facilitate some aspects of this disclosure. For example, when the database **18** is associated with the server **26** as shown in FIG. **1**, the computer **24** transmits data (e.g., database registration records) associating short URLs and/or product identifiers with product registration information (e.g., product serial and model number) to the server for populating or at least updating the look-up table feature, or the like, of the database **18**. In the look-up table feature, or the like, of the database **18**, product identifiers and/or short URLs may be associated with any other suitable information (e.g., for facilitating product registration, servicing, marketing, or the like) for the respective product **10**, prior to the recipient **14** participating in the registration process. For example, the database **18** may comprise a Customer Relationship Management ("CRM") computer database, and the look-up table may be in combination with, incorporated into and/or characterized as the CRM computer database (e.g., the look-up table may be integrated directly into the CRM computer database).

[0029] The registration records in the database **18** (e.g., the look-up table and/or CRM data) may be updated with short URLs and/or product identifiers and associated product registration information (e.g., product serial and model number) in real time with the creation of the product identifies and symbologies **20**, or the updating may occur periodically in a batch process, typically prior to the recipient **14** participating in the registration process. For example, the model, serial numbers and product identifiers (e.g., short URLs) may be contained in the database **18** (e.g., CRM computer database) upon shipment of the associated products **10** from the factory **12**, wherein the model and serial numbers are respectively associated with the corresponding product identifiers for later pairing with other information, as discussed in greater detail below. That is, the registration records contained in the computer database **18** and/or any other suitable location typically contain the model and serial numbers respectively associated with short URLs and/or any other suitable product identifiers for facilitating the registration process discussed in greater detail below. The provider (e.g., company or any other suitable provider) may further populate the registration records in the database **18** with any other pertinent information at any suitable point during the provider's manufacturing or later processes, such as at any suitable time before and/or after the recipient **14** participates in the registration process.

[0030] A recipient **14** of a product **10** may use a computerized mobile device **16** having an optical feature (e.g., module) to capture an image of the registration-related symbology **20** associated with the product **10** they have purchased or otherwise obtained. The optical feature capturing the image of the symbology may comprise a camera module or other suitable optical device module of the recipient's computerized mobile device **16** (e.g., smart phone/cell phone). The mobile device **16** may decode the captured image of the symbology **20** in a conventional manner, such as through execution of suitable software module(s). In accordance with one aspect of this disclosure, the information decoded from the symbology **20** comprises the URL (e.g., shortened URL), wherein the URL (e.g., shortened URL) serves as a product identifier and/or optionally another product identifier is embedded in the symbology. In response to the decoding of the URL from the captured image of the symbology **20**, the mobile device **16** typically automatically accesses the portal apparatus, or more specifically the Product Registration Website provided by the portal apparatus, such as by way of the web browser module, or the like, of the mobile device **16**. Reiterating from above, the portal apparatus and its Product Registration and Relationship Websites may be hosted by the server **26**, the computer **24**, or in any other suitable manner. More specifically and in accordance with the first embodiment, the portal apparatus and its Product Registration and Relationship Websites

are hosted by the server **26**, and the communication between the mobile device **16** and the portal apparatus is by way of the network **30**, wherein the network may comprise the Internet, as discussed above. More specifically, the mobile device **16** may comprise a transceiver module for communicating with one or more cellular data networks, for accessing the Internet.

[0031] In response to the mobile device **16** accessing the portal apparatus, or more specifically the Product Registration Website of the portal apparatus, using the symbology **20** for the first time as discussed above, the Product Registration Webpage **21** typically automatically appears on the display screen of the mobile device **16**. An example of the Product Registration Webpage **21** is shown in FIG. **3**, although the Product Registration Webpage may be in any other suitable configuration. The Product Registration Webpage **21** is configured to be filled with product registration information, and the Product Registration Website is associated with the database **18** for data storage and retrieval. In response to accessing the Product Registration Website and the Product Registration Website receiving the decoded product identifier (e.g., the short URL) as discussed above, the Product Registration Website identifies (e.g., software module(s) associated with the Product Registration Website are executed for identifying) predetermined information in the database **18** (e.g., by way of look-up table(s), or the like) that is associated with the decoded product identifier (e.g., the short URL), for further association with information (i.e., data) input into the Product Registration Webpage **21**. This associating together of the information may be achieved through operation of the Product Registration Website (e.g., software module(s) associated with the Product Registration Website).

[0032] Through operation of the Product Registration Website (e.g., software module(s) associated with the Product Registration Website), the associated-together information may be stored together in the database **18** as a database registration record, or otherwise linked together and saved in any suitable manner, such as in, or as part of, the computerized look-up table, the CRM computer database, or in any other suitable manner or location. For example, the associated-together information may be referred to as a registration record, and the registration record may be maintained in the database **18** (e.g., the CRM computer database). In summary, the fields of the respective registration record may be automatically populated with the entries in the computerized look-up table that are associated with the decoded product identifier (e.g., the short URL), and the registration record may also be populated with the information input into the Product Registration Webpage **21**, e.g., as entered by the recipient **14** via the computerized mobile device **16**. These operations may be carried out through operation of the Product Registration Website (e.g., software module(s) associated with the Product Registration Website).

[0033] The Product Registration Webpage **21** provides for flexible data entry. For example, at least some of the fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21** may be automatically populated with personal information about the recipient **14** that is available from their mobile device **16**, if the mobile device has this "auto-fill" feature and it is enabled. These operations may be carried out through cooperative operation of the Product Registration Website (e.g., software module(s) associated with the Product Registration Website) and the mobile device **16** (e.g., software module(s) associated with the mobile device). The recipient **14** may also manually input and/or edit the fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21** (e.g., by way of a keyboard or touchscreen user interface of the mobile device **16**).

[0034] Stated differently, the Product Registration Website may be optimized specifically for mobile users, so that a simple scan of the symbology **20** by way of a mobile device code reader application executing on the mobile device **16** will auto-generate the model and serial numbers from the computerized look-up tables, or the like, of the computer database **18** using the decoded product identifier (e.g., the short URL). Auto-fill content of a user's mobile device **16** may be accessed, if enabled. More specifically, any personal information already cached on the mobile device **16** (e.g., smart phone) may be automatically uploaded to populate fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21**. However, this auto-generation of the personal information would typically have to be enabled by pre-selecting the auto-fill function of the mobile device **16**, and typically a user of the Product Registration Webpage **21** will have to affirmatively verify that the data on the Product Registration Webpage is accurate and ready to upload. The Product Registration Website may provide uploaded data from the mobile device **16** and the respective information from the computerized look-up tables, or the like, to the CRM computer database in real-time.

[0035] Reiterating, the recipient (e.g., customer or consumer) can scan the symbology **20** associated with their product **10** and automatically be directed to the Product Registration Website, wherein the product identifier (e.g., the short URL) decoded from the symbology is automatically uploaded and used to obtain the model and serial number from the computerized look-up table, or the like. Additional information may also be automatically uploaded to the Product Registration Website, such as name, address, city/state and zip code information from the recipient's mobile device **16**, if an "auto-fill" function on the recipient's mobile device (e.g., web browser) is enabled. This automatic uploading of data drastically reduces time and data input errors, while increasing operational efficiency as data feed may be real-time into the CRM system of registration record. Automatically obtaining data in this way also seeks to ensure that the provider (e.g., company) has accurate product tracking information for consumer contact opportunities, not limited to service flashes and potential product recall notifications.

[0036] The data for products registered online, as discussed above, may be processed in real-time, and the data may be immediately passed through to the CRM system of registration record. This process caters to recipients (e.g., consumers or customers) by allowing for the usage of current technologies, and it also addresses data collection needs of the provider/company, so that the company may, in turn, better fulfill consumer needs. In one aspect of this disclosure, previously used multiple-step processes and redundant actions are streamlined into a consumer-friendly function that provides more efficient CRM input, yielding greater amounts of analytics data for use in marketing metrics.

[0037] In response to the recipient **14** registering their product **10** as discussed above, the Product Registration Website may substantially immediately and automatically confirm the registration to the recipient by way of the recipients mobile devices **16**, with the confirmation being in the form of a confirming webpage, e-mail notification, a text message notification, voicemail notification and/or any other suitable confirmation. This confirmation may be characterized, for example, as a following-up with the recipient **14**, with this

following up comprising using at least some of the personal and product information associated with the registering for communicating with the recipient. Thereafter, the CRM data may be used in a conventional manner or any other suitable manner to communicate with the recipient **14**. These communications may be characterized, for example, as a following-up with the recipient **14**, with this following up comprising using at least some of the personal and product information associated with the registering for communicating with the recipient.

[0038] A second embodiment of this disclosure is like the above-discussed first embodiment, except for variations noted and variations that will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art. In accordance with the second embodiment, non-smart phone users are able to use the short URL and/or a concatenated (e.g., shortened) version of the URL by way of a standard web browser or by way of audible (e.g., verbal) communication using a telephone, or the like, as will be discussed in greater detail below.

[0039] FIGS. **4-7** schematically illustrate aspects of an exemplary method and associated features, in accordance with the first and second embodiments of this disclosure. FIG. **4** schematically illustrates, to the left of the arrow in FIG. **4**, that the original format of the base product data (i.e., data about the products **10** (FIG. **1**)) may be in any suitable form such as, but not limited to, one or more modules in the form of a spreadsheet, tab-delimited text, comma-separated values or pre-scripted arrays, or any other suitable process-compatible format may be used. The arrow in FIG. **4** schematically illustrates that the base product data (e.g., base product data modules) may be stored on and/or processed by way of one or more of any suitable electronic devices such as, but not limited to, enterprise-level servers (e.g., web or print servers), desktop workstations (e.g., for data scrubbing and/or validation) or other databases. As examples, any sufficient software language may be used, such as Structured Query Language (SQL), and the databases may be managed by any suitable database manager, such as SAP. For example, the base product data (e.g., base product data modules) may be located at one or more of the databases **18**, computers **24** or servers **26** of FIG. **1**. The base product data may be processed and located in any suitable manner.

[0040] Referring to FIG. **5** and in accordance with the first and second embodiments, the base product data (which may be located at or obtained from, for example, one or more of the electronic devices shown in FIG. **4**) is used in the generating of (e.g., via execution of one or more software modules) the symbologies **20** that are to be associated with the products **10** at the facility **12**. More specifically, a tagging process (e.g., labeling process) is used for creating tags (e.g., decal or labels **40**) that include the symbologies **20**. Even more specifically in accordance with the first and second embodiments, scripting (e.g., execution of one or more software modules) at the print server (e.g., the print server for the printer **23** (FIG. **1**)) combines product information variables, URL(s), and integrates generation of the symbologies **20** at some point in the labeling process used by the facility **12** (e.g., factory). Scripting at the print server level allows for variable data printing of custom generated symbologies **20** on the product identification labels **40**. Also, for each label **40**, a text version **42** of the shortened URL contained in the symbology **20** may be printed on the label to accommodate for any accessibility concerns, backwards compatibility and/or manual entry. As at least allude to above, Loftware brand enterprise label and print management software modules may be utilized in creating the labels **40**/symbologies **20**; however, any other suitable software, firmware and/or hardware may be used. Also, the symbologies **20** and text versions **42** of the shortened URLs contained in the symbologies **20** may be printed on any suitable substrate, such that the present disclosure is not limited to the use of labels **40**.

[0041] As schematically shown in FIG. **5**, the tags/labels **40**, which typically comprise both the symbologies **20** and the text versions **42** of the shortened URLs contained in the symbologies, may be mounted to, or otherwise associated with, the products **10** at the facility **12** (e.g., factory). With regard to the assembling and packaging line for the products **10** at the facility **12** (e.g., factory), the labels **40** may be paired with (e.g., mounted to or otherwise associated with) the products **10** at the point where owner's manuals, registration information and product information are paired with the products. In this regard, the labels **40** may have an adhesive backing and may be used in place of, or in addition to, conventional labels (not shown) that are conventionally mounted to, or otherwise associated with, the products at the facility **12**. For example, the products **10** may be of any suitable type for which product identification or registration information is provided to the recipient **14** (e.g., consumer) with the product (e.g., appliance).

[0042] From the facility **12** (e.g., factory), the products **10** may reach the recipients **14** through any suitable conventional channels of distribution, commerce, or the like. For example, FIG. **6** schematically illustrates recipients **14** (e.g., consumers) that are in receipt of (e.g., holding) products **10** that they have, for example, purchased. As should be apparent from the foregoing, the products **10** may be in many different forms and sizes, are not limited to products that may be held by the recipients **14**.

[0043] When the recipients **14** (e.g., consumers) obtain/receive their products **10**, they will have (e.g., at least will be able to readily obtain) access to the labels **40**/symbologies **20**/text versions **42** of the shortened URLs associated with their products. Preferably (e.g., optionally) and as schematically shown in FIG. **6**, the recipient **14** scans the symbology **20** associated with (e.g., mounted to) their product **10** with their computerized mobile device **16** (e.g., smart phone).

[0044] Several nonlimiting examples of mobile devices **16** (e.g., smart phones) are shown in FIG. **7**. As schematically shown in FIG. **7**, the mobile device **16** automatically obtains accesses to the Product Registration Website (e.g., Product Registration Webpage **21**) by way of the web browser, or the like, of the mobile device in response to the mobile device scanning the symbology **20** of the label **40** associated with the product. More specifically, scanning the symbology **20** causes the web browser module of the mobile device **16** to be directed to a predetermined website. Through operation of one or more software modules associated with the portal apparatus, a scripted redirection feature of the portal apparatus checks the referring shortened URL, and matches (e.g., via a look-up table of database **18** or any other suitable methods and/or devices) the referring shortened URL to the corresponding long URL so that the Product Registration Webpage **21** of the Product Registration Website is displayed on the display screen of the mobile device **16** as discussed in greater detail below. The URL of the scanned symbology **20** being associated in the database **18** with the information about the product **10** associated with the scanned symbology **20** facilitates the automatic identification of and the automatic

populating of at least some of the fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21** displayed on the display screen of the mobile device **16**. In addition, other fields of the of the Product Registration Webpage **21** displayed on the display screen of the mobile device **16** may be automatically filled, such as with information (e.g., the recipient's name and address) from the mobile device if the auto-fill function is enabled for the web browser of the mobile device. Accordingly, in one aspect of this disclosure, the portal apparatus is operative for associating the recipient's personal information with information from the provider about the product **10** identified by the product identifier (e.g., the short URL), for product registration purposes, without the recipient inputting at least some of one or more of the information from the provider and the recipient's personal information.

[0045] When at least a sufficient number of the fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21** are automatically or otherwise filled, the recipient **14** may visually review and verify the data displayed by way of the Product Registration Webpage and thereafter select a "submit" button or icon on their mobile device **16**. Before the submitting, the recipient **14** may edit or otherwise modify the data in one or more of the fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21** using the user interface of their mobile device **16**.

[0046] As schematically illustrated in FIG. **7**, in response to the recipient **14** selecting to submit the data in the fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21**, the data in the fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21**, and any additional associated data, are transmitted in a predetermined manner for completing the registration process. This completing of the registration process may comprise updating or creating the respective registration record, such as by way of sending the data in the fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21**, and any additional associated data, to a local database **32** (e.g., such as the CRM computer database, which may be managed by any suitable database manager, such as SAP). Additionally, the data in the fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21**, and any additional associated data, may be sent to a remote databases **34**, such as for control and verification, and/or backup purposes. Additionally, a notification **36** may be sent to the recipient **14** to confirm that their registration has been completed and/or for providing any other suitable information (e.g., for soliciting extended service warranty business). As schematically shown in FIG. **7**, the notification **36** may be a confirming email (e.g., with the email comprising the data in the fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21**, and any other suitable associated data) that may be sent to the recipient **14** (e.g., the recipient's mobile device **16**) over the second network **30** to confirm that their registration has been completed. The sending of the data to the databases **32**, **34** and the sending of the notification **36** may be facilitated through the execution of one or more software modules associated with the Product Registration Website.

[0047] Regarding the local and remote databases **32**, **34**, the database **18** of FIG. **1** may serve as either one of the local and remote databases **32**, **34**. Alternatively, one or both of the local and remote databases **32**, **34** may be in addition to the database **18**, wherein the local and remote databases **32**, **34** may be respectively associated with the computer **24** and the server **26**, or the databases may be in any other suitable location.

[0048] In summary regarding one aspect of this disclosure, if a recipient's mobile device **16** has a web browser module, or the like, with an enabled auto-fill module, and the mobile device is equipped for (e.g., has one or more modules for) scanning and decoding symbologies **20**, then the recipient **14** may scan the subject symbology with their mobile device **16** and may substantially immediately thereafter select (i.e., actuate or activate) a "submit" button or icon associated with the Product Registration Webpage **21** to complete their part of the registration process. Accordingly, in one aspect of this disclosure, the portal apparatus is operative for associating the recipient's personal information with information from the provider about the product **10** identified by the product identifier (e.g., the short URL), for product registration purposes, without the recipient inputting at least some of one or more of the information from the provider and the recipient's personal information. For example, the portal apparatus may be operative for associating the recipient's personal information with information from the provider about the product **10** identified by the product identifier (e.g., the short URL), for product registration purposes, without the recipient inputting any of the recipient's personal information into the Product Registration Webpage **21** and/or without the recipient inputting any of the information from the provider about the product **10** into the Product Registration Webpage **21**. Alternatively, the recipient **14** may edit or otherwise complete fields of the Product Registration Webpage **21** before selecting the "submit" button or icon associated with the Product Registration Webpage **21**.

[0049] As an alternative to using a mobile device **16**, such as a smart phone, to scan and decode the symbology **20** associated with their product **10**, the recipient **14** may utilize the text version **42** of the shortened URL that is typically adjacent to the symbology in order to carry out their part of the registration process. For example, the recipient **14** may manually type the text version **42** of the shortened URL into any suitable computerized device that is executing a web browser software program. Accordingly, the device **16** may be generally characterized as being the suitable computerized device. In response to the recipient **14** manually typing the text version **42** of the shortened URL into the suitable computerized device that is executing the web browser software program, the process may proceed substantially as discussed above. As an alternative to using a computerized mobile device **16** or other suitable computerized device as discussed above, and for maximizing accessibility, a recipient **14** (e.g., perhaps an elderly or disabled consumer) that may not have, may not be able to use, or may not want to use a computerized device, may use a telephone to call a Call Center. For example and during the telephone call, the recipient **14** may read the text version **42** of the shortened URL, which is typically adjacent the symbology **20**, to a representative at the Call Center, and the representative at the Call Center may assist in facilitating completion of the registration process.

[0050] FIG. **8** is a process flow diagram illustrating an exemplary process that may be used for facilitating registration of a product **10** that is provided by a provider and received by a recipient **14**, in accordance with an aspect of this disclosure. As shown in FIG. **8**, in block **70** initial data is provided. The initial data may include the data discussed above that is in existence prior to the printing of the symbologies **20**, such as the data to be embodied in the symbologies and the data in the database **18** prior to the recipients registering their products **10**. For example, for each product, the initial data in the database **18** may include only product serial and model numbers, and the unique short URL associated with the product. Also, in the database registration record for each product, the

initial data typically further includes a long URL for automatically directing the recipient **14** to the Product Registration Webpage **21** (FIGS. **3** and **7**) of the Product Registration Website. That is, the short URLs may be assigned via a lookup table of the database **18** to a long URL for automatically directing the recipients **14** to the Product Registration Webpage **21** of the Product Registration Website. The long URLs may be contained in fields respectively of the registration records in the database **18**, so that different short URLs may redirect to different long URLs, and the URLs to which the short URLs redirect may be changed (e.g., over time), as will be discussed in greater detail below.

[0051] At least partially reiterating from above, the initial data provided at block **70** may only include the short URL and associated product serial and model numbers, or it may include additional information, such as a long URL associated with the short URL, dates for promotion tracking, boolean assignments for returning users, and/or any other suitable information. In one example, each symbology **20** may include only its short URL, with the information associated with the short URL being associated by way of the look-up table, or the like, of the database **18**, or the like. In this example, for each short URL, all information associated with the short URL may be fully variable at any time, by virtue of the information being editable/changeable in the look-up table of the database **18**. Alternatively, one or more of the fields of reach registration record in the look-up table of the database **18** may be set up so that its contents may not be edited or otherwise changed.

[0052] At block **70**, the database **18** may be built out and populated in a manner for facilitating at least the reminder of the registration process. For example, the registration records and fields of the database **18** may be built out, or the like, for being populated with the additional registration information to be provided in the future, and fields may be set up to be dynamically assigned, modified or otherwise adjusted in the future as needed, for handling different languages, returning users, promotional items, surveys or other features for promoting relationships with the recipients **14** (e.g., customers). As indicated above, the database **18** of FIG. **1** may serve as either one of the local and remote databases **32**, **34** of FIG. **7**. Alternatively, one or both of the local and remote databases **32**, **34** may be in addition to the database **18**, wherein the local and remote databases **32**, **34** may be respectively associated with the computer **24** and the server **26**, or the databases may be in any other suitable location. That is, the data of this disclosure may distributed across the databases **18**, **32**, **34**, the multiple databases may be provided for purposes of redundancy (e.g., to increase reliability), and/or the one or more databases may be managed in any other suitable manner. Continuing with FIG. **8**, in block **75**, the symbologies **20** may be created and associated with the products **10** as discussed above. Then, in block **80** communications may be received from the recipients **14** as discussed above and as will be discussed in greater detail below, registration of products **10** may be facilitated as discussed above and as will be discussed in greater detail below, and relationships with the recipients **14** may be further facilitated, as discussed above and in greater detail below.

[0053] FIG. **9** is a process flow diagram illustrating in greater detail an exemplary processes of block **80** of FIG. **8**, in accordance with an aspect of this disclosure. The process illustrated by FIG. **9** may be carried out by the portal apparatus, as will be discussed in greater detail below. Referring to FIG. **9**, in block **100**, the portal apparatus receives at least the shortened URL, such as from a computerized mobile device **16**, or in any other suitable manner, as discussed above.

[0054] In some embodiments, processing control is transferred from block **100** to block **105**, and in block **105** a determination is made by the portal apparatus as to whether registration has already been completed, such as in the manner described above, for the product identified by the URL. If product registration has not occurred for the URL received at block **100**, processing control is transferred to block **110**. If product registration has already occurred for the URL received at block **100**, processing control is transferred to block **120**. In block **110**, the portal apparatus sends the Product Registration Webpage **21** (FIGS. **3** and **7**) of the Product Registration Website to the computerized device **16** from which the short URL was received at block **100**. In contrast, in block **120**, the portal apparatus sends the Relationship Webpage (FIG. **10**) of the Relationship Website to the computerized device **16** from which the short URL was received at block **100**.

[0055] In some embodiments, it may be preferable (e.g., optional) for decision block **105** to be generally or substantially omitted and/or for its functionality to be provided in another suitable way. For example, prior to block **100**, such as in block **70** of the process of FIG. **8**, the long URL for the Product Registration Webpage **20** may be associated, in the database **18**, with the short URL to be received at block **100**. As a result and for example, in response to the mobile device **16** sending a short URL to the portal apparatus for the first time, or perhaps any other time before product registration is completed for the product associated with the short URL, the portal apparatus may automatically, responsively transfer processing control from block **100** to block **110**, so that the portal apparatus sends the Product Registration Webpage **21** of the Product Registration Website to the computerized device **16** from which the short URL was received at block **100**.

[0056] On the other hand and as will be discussed in greater detail below, after the product registration has been completed for the product associated with the short URL received at block **100**, the long URL for the Relationship Webpage (FIG. **10**) of the Relationship Website will have already been associated in the database **18** with the short URL received at block **100**, so that the portal apparatus may automatically, responsively transfer processing control from block **100** to block **120**, so that the portal apparatus sends the Relationship Webpage of the Relationship Website to the computerized device **16** from which the short URL was received at block **100**.

[0057] Processing control is transferred from block **110** to block **125**. At block **125**, the registration may be completed for the product **10** associated with the URL received at block **100**, and the registration may be completed through the use of the Registration Webpage **21** of the Product Registration Website, as discussed in detail above.

[0058] Processing control is transferred from block **130** to block **135**. At block **135**, the portal apparatus queries the database **18** to determine whether the recipient **14** associated with the URL received at block **100** has a relationship account number, or the like, for allowing the recipient to access the Relationship Webpage of the Relationship Website. If a negative determination is made at block **135**, processing control is transferred to block **140**. If a positive determination is made at block **135**, processing control is transferred to block **145**.

[0059] In block **140**, the first time a recipient **14** registers a product **10** using the portal apparatus as discussed above, the recipient is assigned a unique, relationship account number for use with the portal apparatus (e.g., the Relationship Website), and that unique relationship account number is associated with the recipient in the database **18**. In block **145**, each time a recipient **14** with a relationship account number registers a product **10** using the portal apparatus, their relationship account number is associated with the product associated with the short URL received any at block **100**. Processing control is transferred from block **145** to block **150**, although the operations of block **150** may occur at any suitable time that may be simultaneous with or after the operations of block **130**.

[0060] At block **150**, in the database **18**, or more specifically in the registration record associated with the short URL received at block **100**, the field containing the long URL for the Registration Webpage of the Registration Website is edited so that field contains the long URL for the Relationship Webpage of the Relationship Website rather than long URL for the Registration Webpage of the Registration Website. Alternatively, other suitable measures may be taken at block **150** so that, going forward, when the short URL associated with an already registered product **10** is received at block **100**, the short URL redirects to the URL for the Relationship Webpage of the Relationship Website (e.g., processing control is transferred from block **100** to block **120**). Processing control is transferred from block **145** or **150** to block **155**.

[0061] In block **155**, the portal apparatus (e.g., the Product Registration Website) may substantially immediately and automatically confirm the registration to the recipient by way of the recipients mobile devices **16**, with the confirmation being in the form of a confirming webpage, e-mail notification, a text message notification, voicemail notification and/or any other suitable confirmation. Alternatively or in addition, registration confirmation may be provided or further provided by processing control being transferred to block **120**. As indicated above, in block **120**, the portal apparatus sends the Relationship Webpage (FIG. **10**) of the Relationship Website to the computerized device **16** from which the short URL was received at block **100**, or to another suitable location.

[0062] An example of a Relationship Webpage of the Relationship Website is shown in FIG. **10**, although the Relationship Webpage and Website may be in any other suitable configuration. In accordance with one aspect of this disclosure, when the Relationship Webpage or Website is provided in block **120**, the Relationship Webpage or Website is automatically customized in view of the relationship account associated with the short URL that was received at block **100**. That is and in certain embodiments, the Relationship Webpage or Website is automatically customized taking into account at least some of, or substantially all of, the products **14** and other relevant information that is included in the database **18** and is associated with the relationship account associated with short URL that was received at block **100**.

[0063] In certain embodiments of this disclosure, the portal apparatus is operative for facilitating intentional involvement of a provider (e.g., company) in its engagement with recipients **14** (e.g., consumers, such as customers) over an extended period of time, such as for promoting an exchange of communications through the Relationship Website, wherein the communications via the Relationship Website may include promotions of future purchases, cross-sell offers, targeted ads, maintenance reminders, and other suitable features for facilitating consumer engagement with the provider. That is, the Relationship Website may be operative to encourage the consumer to provide additional data to the provider (e.g., company), which the provider may use for a variety of purposes. For example, one aspect of this disclosure is the provision of a system that seeks to promote product registration and serve as an enhanced customer relationship management system. The system of this disclosure may advantageously be used to promote standardization of product labeling and registration procedures.

[0064] Referring for example to the Relationship Webpage shown in FIG. **10**, it includes icons for numerous pull-down or fold-out menu(s), such as for subscriptions, appliances and accessories, and each of the menus may cascade hierarchally. For example, FIG. **10** schematically shows a subscriptions menu or tab folded out, or the like, so as to provide selectable icons for "water filters", "cleaners" and "maintain parts". Similarly, other menus, tabs and/or icons of the Relationship Website may be selected, folded out, or the like. A variety of icons, menus, tabs and other graphic user interface features are within the scope of this disclosure.

[0065] In addition or alternatively, each recipient **14** having a relationship account with the portal apparatus may be able to interact with the portal apparatus to implement their preferences and have those preferences stored in the database **18**, or the like, and reflected in their personalized Relationship Webpage. For example, a registered recipient **14** may choose to have information about their registered products **10** organized and displayed all together in their personalized Relationship Webpage, such as by having their registered products sorted or organized as major appliances, small appliances, accessories, or the like. The sorting/organizing may also be by product line, like Cooking/Kitchen, Laundry, etc. In addition to the Relationship Web site presenting information from the database **18**, it may also present advertising and other types of offers to the recipients **14**, for example as shown in FIG. **10**.

[0066] In the foregoing, each server, computer or computerized device may be in the form of, or comprise, one or more computer or computer-like devices (which may include one or more appropriate input and output devices, processors, memories and software module(s) (e.g., computer-readable mediums having computer-executable instructions for performing one or more of the steps described herein)). Similarly, each computerized look-up table, computer database or software module may be in the form of one or more computerized look-up tables, computer databases or software module(s), and vice versa.

[0067] As a more specific example, FIG. **11** illustrates a block diagram of an apparatus **200** that is representative of apparatuses that may be respectively implemented on each of the above-discussed servers, computers or computerized devices (e.g., the mobile device **16**, computer **24** and server **26**), in accordance with some exemplary embodiments of this disclosure. It will be appreciated that the components, devices or elements illustrated in and described with respect to FIG. **11** below may not be mandatory and thus some may be omitted in certain embodiments. Additionally, some embodiments may include further or different components, devices or elements beyond those illustrated in and described with respect to FIG. **11**.

[0068] In some exemplary embodiments, the apparatus **200** may include processing circuitry **210** that is configurable to

perform actions in accordance with one or more exemplary embodiments disclosed herein. In this regard and for the apparatus **200** implemented on the mobile device **16**, the processing circuitry **210** may be configured to perform and/or control performance of one or more of the above-discussed functionalities of the mobile device **16** in accordance with various exemplary embodiments. Similarly, for the apparatus **200** implemented on the computer **24**, the processing circuitry **210** may be configured to perform and/or control performance of one or more of the above-discussed functionalities of the computer **24** in accordance with various exemplary embodiments. As another example, for the apparatus **200** implemented on the server **26**, the processing circuitry **210** may be configured to perform and/or control performance of one or more of the above-discussed functionalities of the server **26** in accordance with various exemplary embodiments.

[0069] In some exemplary embodiments, the processing circuitry **210** may include a processor **212** and, in some embodiments, such as that illustrated in FIG. **11**, may further include memory **214**. The processing circuitry **210** may be in communication with or otherwise control a communication interface **216**, user interface **218**, and one or more modules **220** such as, but not limited to, respective ones of the above-discussed modules. That is, the modules **220** may be respectively illustrative of the above-discussed modules of the mobile device **16**, computer **24** and server **26**.

[0070] The processor **212** may be embodied in a variety of forms. For example, the processor **212** may be embodied as various hardware-based processing means such as a microprocessor, a coprocessor; a controller or various other computing or processing devices including integrated circuits such as, for example, an ASIC (application specific integrated circuit), an FPGA (field programmable gate array), some combination thereof, or the like. Although illustrated as a single processor, it will be appreciated that the processor **212** may comprise a plurality of processors. The plurality of processors may be in operative communication with each other and may be collectively configured to perform one or more of the above-discussed functionalities. In some exemplary embodiments, the processor **212** may be configured to execute instructions that may be stored in the memory **214** or that may be otherwise accessible to the processor **212**. As such, whether configured by hardware or by a combination of hardware and software, the processor **212** is capable of performing operations according to various embodiments while configured accordingly.

[0071] In some exemplary embodiments, the memory **214** may include one or more memory devices. Memory **214** may include fixed and/or removable memory devices. In some embodiments, the memory **214** may provide a non-transitory computer-readable storage medium that may store computer program instructions that may be executed by the processor **212**. In this regard, the memory **214** may be configured to store information, data, applications, instructions and/or the like for enabling the electronic communications device **102** to carry out various functions in accordance with one or more exemplary embodiments. In some embodiments, the memory **214** may be in communication with one or more of the processor **212**, communication interface **216**, user interface **218**, and modules **220** via bus(es) for passing information among components of the apparatus **200**.

[0072] As alluded to above, the apparatus **200** may include a communication interface **216**. The communication interface **216** may be configured to enable the device (e.g., the mobile device **16**, computer **24** and server **26**) on which the apparatus is implemented to communicate with one or move other computing devices. In this regard, the communication interface **216** may include one or more interface mechanisms for enabling communication with other devices and/or networks. As such, the communication interface **216** may include, for example, an antenna (or multiple antennas) and supporting hardware and/or software for enabling communications with a wireless communication network (e.g., a cellular network, WLAN, and/or the like) and/or a communication modem or other hardware/software for supporting communication via cable, digital subscriber line (DSL), USB, FireWire, Ethernet or other wireline networking methods. As such, the communication interface **216** of some exemplary embodiments may be configured to support communications over the network(s) **28**, **30**.

[0073] As alluded to above, the apparatus **200** may include a user interface **218**. The user interface **218** may be in communication with the processing circuitry **210** to receive an indication of a user input at the user interface **218** and/or to provide an audible, visual, mechanical or other output to the user. As such, the user interface **218** may include, for example, a keyboard, a mouse, a joystick, a display, a touch screen, a microphone, a speaker, and/or other input/output mechanisms.

[0074] In accordance with certain exemplary embodiments of this disclosure, the apparatus **200** is or otherwise comprises the above-discussed portal apparatus, such that reference numeral **200** designates the portal apparatus. In accordance with these exemplary embodiments, one of the modules **210** of the portal apparatus **200** may configured for providing the Registration Website, and another of the modules **210** of the portal apparatus **200** may configured for providing the Relationship Website, such that reference numerals **210** designate Registration and Relationship Website modules. Notwithstanding, the Registration and Relationship Websites may be provided together as a module or may be provided by a series modules and/or portal apparatuses, or in any other suitable manner.

[0075] One aspect of this disclosure is the provision of the portal apparatus **200**, wherein the portal apparatus provides features for promoting communications between the provider and the recipient, and at least some of these communications promote the marketing-related interests of the provider. In addition or alternatively, the communications may be for providing data to be analyzed by the provider in a manner that is less marketing focused. As one specific example, the Relationship Website and/or one or more other features of this disclosure may be omitted or varied for a wide variety of purposes.

[0076] Although the above disclosure has been presented in the context of exemplary embodiments, it is to be understood that modifications and variations may be utilized without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, as those skilled in the art will readily understand. Such modifications and variations are considered to be within the purview and scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.

1-14. (canceled)

15. A method for at least registering a product with a provider, the product being provided by a provider and received by a recipient, the method comprising a computing system associated with the provider:

generating a symbology comprising a single decodable uniform resource locator (URL) for at least indirectly accessing a website comprising a first webpage, wherein the symbology is configured to be decoded by a computing device associated with the recipient;

formatting an electronic registration record comprising an association between the URL and a product specific identifier corresponding to the product;

storing the electronic registration record in a memory;

receiving the URL from the computing device associated with the recipient; and

in response to receiving the URL:

determining the product specific identifier based at least in part on the URL;

identifying the stored electronic registration record based at least in part on the product specific identifier;

sending the first webpage to a web browser of the computing device associated with the recipient, wherein the first webpage includes fields configured for receiving personal information associated with the recipient for registering the product;

receiving the personal information associated with the recipient from the web browser of the computing device associated with the recipient, wherein receiving the personal information occurs at least partially in response to sending the first webpage;

amending the stored electronic registration record to include the personal information associated with the recipient, at least in part to register the product with the provider, such that the personal information associated with the recipient is stored in the memory in association with the product specific identifier; and

amending a lookup reference associating the URL with the first webpage to associate the URL with a second webpage, instead of the first webpage, such that the second webpage is provided to the web browser of the computing device associated with the recipient in response to any subsequent receipt of the same URL from the computing device associated with the recipient, wherein the second webpage is different than the first webpage.

16. The method according to claim **15**, further comprising the computing system associated with the provider:

receiving the URL a subsequent time after registering the product and amending the lookup reference; and

in response to receiving the URL the subsequent time;

determining, based on the lookup reference, the second webpage associated with the URL; and

sending the second webpage to the web browser of the computing device associated with the recipient.

17. The method according to claim **15**, wherein the computing system associated with the provider amending a lookup reference further comprises the computing system associated with the provider amending a lookup reference associating the URL with the first webpage comprising a registration webpage, to instead associate the URL with a second webpage comprising a relationship webpage.

18. The method according to claim **15**, wherein the computing system associated with the provider amending a lookup reference associating the URL with the first webpage to associate the URL with a second webpage, further comprises the computing system associated with the provider replacing the first webpage with the second webpage in a look-up table associated with the lookup reference.

19. The method according to claim **15**, wherein the computing system associated with the provider generating a symbology further comprises the computing system associated with the provider generating a two-dimensional matrix code symbology.

20. The method according to claim **15**, wherein the computing system associated with the provider determining the product specific identifier further comprises the computing system associated with the provider determining the product specific identifier, selected from the group consisting of a serial number for the product and a model number for the product, based at least in part on the URL.

21. The method according to claim **15**, wherein the computing system associated with the provider receiving the personal information associated with the recipient further comprises the computing system associated with the provider receiving the personal information associated with the recipient, comprising an address of the recipient, for communicating with the recipient.

22. The method according to claim **15**, further comprising the computing system associated with the provider communicating with the recipient, at least partially based on the personal information associated with the recipient and the product specific identifier corresponding to the product.

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